REMARKS

The Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider the application as amended. In the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that the claims contained allowable subject matter, and that grammatical errors in the claims should be corrected before a Notice of Allowance would be issued.

Claims 1-13 remain pending in this application. Claims 1 to 6 have been amended to more clearly define the invention in response to the Examiner's objections to claim form. For the Examiner's convenience, claims 1-13 in their present form have been reproduced in the attached Appendix I and the marked-up amended claims are reproduced in attached Appendix II. The amendments place the application in condition for allowance. The Applicant believes the amendments have corrected the grammatical errors in the claims, but invites the Examiner to contact the undersigned attorney by telephone to identify "other grammatical errors" that were not specified in the Office Action if the Examiner contends such purported errors remain in the present claims as amended.

The Examiner has not yet acknowledged Applicant's proposed drawing amendment submitted with the January 24, 2001 Response and Amendment. Applicant believes the proposed amendment corrected the noted deficiency.

In the event the Examiner believes an interview might serve to advance the prosecution of this application in any way, the undersigned attorney is available at the telephone number noted below.

Enclosed is a Petition for a Two-Month Extension of time, along with a check for $400.00 to cover the extension fee under 37 CFR §1.17. Should the Commissioner find that any other fee is due before the Examiner may consider this paper, including any fee for a further extension of time under 37 CFR §1.136, such extension is requested and the Commissioner is authorized to charge the fee to Deposit Account No. 03-2775.

Respectfully submitted,
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Enclosure
Appendix I (pending claims 1-13 - clean form)
Appendix II (marked up version of amended claims 1-6)
Petition for 2-Month Extension
$400.00 check (37 CFR 1.17(a))

APPENDIX I

Pending Claims in 09/402,121

1. (Thrice amended) Joint arrangement for a surface structure, which surface structure, together with one or several other surface structures, is intended for temporarily protecting and covering a ground surface, each surface structure having (a) one or more corners, (b) at least one joint arrangement for removable attachment of one or several adjacent surface structures, and (c) thermal insulation (1) that comprises at least one essentially plastic based thermal insulation layer (1'), and wherein the joint arrangement comprises a joint piece (x), that is to be coupled by means of a locking assembly (y), for coupling of the adjacent surface structures with each other essentially by the corners of the surface structures, which joint piece (x) comprises a right-angled frame part defining one or more corners, and wherein the locking assembly (y) is arranged by projections (y1) placed at the corners of the frame part and by recesses (y2) of the same shape that are placed underside the surface structure, and wherein an integral support arrangement (1a) that comprises a platform structure projects from the bottom surface of the surface structure beyond a basic wall thickness (s) of the surface structure, **characterized** in that: the frame part (x1) of the joint piece (x) has an open center, and one or more recesses (1a') existing in the platform structure pass into the open center, whereby the height of the recesses (1a') corresponds essentially to the thickness (h) of the frame part (x1).

2. (Thrice amended) Joint arrangement according to claim 1, **characterized** in that: the platform structure has one or more square shaped platforms (1a"), that are placed over the bottom

surface of the surface structure, and the platforms (1a") embed into the open center of the framepart (x1) of the joint piece.

3. (Amended) Joint arrangement according to claim 1, **characterized** in that: recesses (y2) are arranged at each corner of the surface structure.

4. (Fourth amendment) Joint arrangement according to claim 1 in which the joint arrangement comprises coupling means (z) having male and female couplers (z1, z2) placed at the outer edges of the surface structure, **characterized** in that: both the male and female couplers (z1, z2) are arranged at opposite outer edges of the surface structure.

5. (Amended) Joint arrangement according to claim 4, characterized in that: the male couplers (z1) are projections that are placed at the lower edges of the longitudinal (p1) outer edges of the surface structure, and the corresponding female couplers (z2) are recesses in the lower edges of the crosswise (p2) outer edges.

6. (Amended) Joint arrangement according to claim 4, **characterized** in that: the male and female couplers (z1, z2) comprise an auxiliary support/sealing assembly (z3) having counterpart surfaces placed at the upper edge of the outer surface of the surface structure at an angle (α), which deviates from vertical.

7. A temporary ground covering, comprising:

a plurality of surface structures each having a substantially planar top surface of thermal insulation and a bottom surface from which support projections extend;

a joint means for removably connecting the plurality of surface structures;

said joint means forming a parallelogram frame structure with an open center that receives one support projection from each of the surface structures; and

said joint means having four locking means, projecting from and forming an essentially normal angle with a substantially planar surface of the frame structure at each corner, each for interlocking with a corresponding recess member formed in a bottom surface corner of one attached surface structure, wherein

said support projections of each support structure lift the surface structure to form a gap between the ground surface and portions of the bottom surface not having support projections extending beneath them, and

the height of each support projection corresponds essentially with the thickness of the frame structure.

8. The temporary ground covering of claim 7, wherein:

the open center of the frame structure receives a support projection from each of four surface structures attached to the joint means.

9. The temporary ground covering of claim 7, wherein:

the joint means has eight locking means, two at each corner of the frame structure, and

the two locking means at each corner of the frame structure interlock with two corresponding recess members formed in a bottom surface corner of one attached surface structure.

10. The temporary ground covering of claim 7, wherein:

the top surface of each surface structure is essentially square shaped; and

each surface structure has a coupling means, having a male coupler or a female coupler arranged on each side edge of the surface structure with the male and female couplers formed opposite one another, for coupling the side edges of each surface structure to the side edges of other surface structures.

11. The temporary ground covering of claim 10, wherein:

each male coupler has a side projection extending from a lower portion of the side edge and each female coupler has a corresponding recess on a lower portion of the side edge for mating with the side projection of the connected male coupler.

12. The temporary ground covering of claim 10, wherein:

the male and female couplers comprise a sealing means, having counterpart surfaces formed on an upper portion of their respective side edges, for sealing the joined edges of connected surface structures, and

the counterpart surfaces form an angle that deviates from a normal line of the top surface.

13. The temporary ground covering of claim 12, wherein:

the angle the counterpart surfaces form with the normal line of the top surface is approximately 15 degrees.

APPENDIX II

Marked-Up Amended Pending Claims in 09/402,121

1. (Thrice amended) Joint arrangement for a surface structure, which surface structure, [is meant] together with one or several other surface structures, is intended for [temporary] temporarily protecting and covering a ground surface, each surface structure having (a) one or more corners, [and] (b) at least [a] one joint arrangement for removable attachment of one or several adjacent surface structures, and [having] (c) thermal insulation (1) that comprises at least one [,] essentially plastic based thermal insulation layer (1'), and wherein [in which] the joint arrangement comprises a joint piece (x), that is to be coupled by means of a locking assembly (y), for coupling of the adjacent surface structures with each other essentially by the corners of the surface structures, which joint piece (x) comprises a right-angled frame part defining one or more corners, and wherein the locking assembly (y) is arranged by projections (y1) placed at the corners of the frame part and by recesses (y2) of the same shape[,] that are placed underside the surface structure, and wherein an integral support arrangement (1a) that comprises a platform structure projects from [to] the bottom surface of the surface structure [there has been arranged an integral support arrangement (1a), that comprises a platform structure projecting] beyond a basic wall thickness (s) of the surface structure, **characterized** in that: [a] the frame part (x1) of the joint piece (x) has an open center, and [is arranged to pass] one or more recesses (1a') existing in the platform structure pass into the open center, whereby the height of the recesses (1a') [is arranged to] corresponds essentially to the thickness (h) of the frame part (x1).

2. (Thrice amended) Joint arrangement according to claim 1, **characterized** in that: the platform structure [(1a) is arranged by] has one or more [single and] square shaped platforms (1a"), that are placed over the bottom surface of the surface structure, and the platforms (1a") embed into the open center of the framepart (x1) of the joint piece [is arranged to embed four platforms (1a")].

3. (Amended) Joint arrangement according to claim 1, **characterized** in[,] that: recesses (y2) are arranged at each corner of the surface structure [there has been arranged two recesses (y2) one after the other at each side].

4. (Fourth amendment) Joint arrangement according to claim 1 in which the joint arrangement comprises coupling means (z) having male and female couplers (z1, z2) placed at the outer edges of the surface [structures] structure, **characterized** in that: both the male and female couplers (z1, z2) are arranged at opposite outer edges of the surface structure.

5. (Amended) Joint arrangement according to claim 4, **characterized in** [,] that: the male couplers (z1) are [arranged by] projections [being] that are placed at the lower edges of the longitudinal (p1) outer edges of the surface structure, and [correspondingly] the corresponding female couplers (z2) [by] are recesses [being placed at] in the lower edges of the crosswise (p2) outer edges.

6. (Amended) Joint arrangement according to claim 4, **characterized** in [,] that: the male and female couplers (z1, z2) comprise an auxiliary support/sealing assembly (z3) having counterpart surfaces placed at the upper edge of the outer surface of the surface structure at an angle (α), which deviates [essentially] from [the] vertical [direction, and the counterpart surfaces are directed to either opposite directions or to the same direction with respect to the surface structure].